

ALABAMA BOARD OF NURSING

CHAPTER 610-X-3

NURSING EDUCATION PROGRAMS

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610-X-3-.01 Definitions

(1) Approved Program: A nursing education program that meets all of the standards as specified in these rules.

(2) Articulation: A planned process between two or more educational programs or systems to assist students to make a smooth transition from one program to another without duplication in learning or coursework.

(3) Clinical and theoretical competence: The possession of knowledge, attitudes and skills, and the ability to apply these attributes to meet current standards of nursing practice and education as specified in Chapter 610-X-6, Standards of Nursing Practice, Chapter 610-X-3, Nursing Education Programs, and Chapter 610-X-4, Licensure.

(4) Clinical Learning Experiences: Organized plan of learning experiences that provides nursing students an opportunity to develop competencies in the assessment, planning, implementation and evaluation of nursing care appropriate to the scope of practice for the level and type of program. Programs that offer only simulations or clinical testing do not meet the requirements for providing clinical learning experiences for nursing students.

(5) Clinical Supervisor: A licensed registered nurse, acting in a supervisory capacity of clinical learning experiences, who is accessible to assign or prescribe a course of action, give procedural guidance, direction and evaluation for a nursing student(s).

(6) Curriculum: An organized plan of study in nursing that includes both theoretical and clinical learning experiences essential for preparing students to be eligible upon graduation to apply for licensure as a registered nurse or licensed practical nurse.

(7) **Curriculum Outcomes:** A common set of competencies expected of a program's graduates upon completion of an organized plan of study. Outcomes are clear, measurable demonstrations of student learning that occurs at or after the end of a comprehensive set of learning experiences.

(8) **Deficiency(ies):** Failure of a nursing education program to meet one or more of the standards as stated in Chapter 610-X-3, Nursing Education Programs.

(9) **Distance Education:** A formal educational process in which the majority of the instruction in a course/program occurs when instructors and students are not physically in the same location. The educational process may use various methodologies for communication, instruction, and evaluation.

(10) **Licensed Hospital:** A facility described in Code of Alabama, 1975, Section 22-21-20(1), other than a health maintenance organization, which has an organized medical staff or which employs the services of a medical director who is a physician licensed to practice medicine in Alabama. The term hospital shall not include the private offices of physicians or dentists, whether in individual, group, professional corporation or professional association practice.

(11) **Provisional Approval:** The initial status granted to a new nursing education program that evidences the potential to meet the standards set forth in Chapter 610-X-3, Nursing Education Programs.

(12) **Survey:** A comprehensive Board authorized on-site evaluation or review of a written report for a proposed or existing program that serves as verification of the program's compliance with the Board's educational standards.

(13) **Systematic Plan of Evaluation:** A comprehensive written document that reflects ongoing evaluation of all program components that includes, but is not limited to, collection of objective data, evaluation of outcomes, and results in improvements based on evaluative data.

(14) **Unencumbered license:** an active license that has no current stipulations, conditions, or limitations.

Author: Alabama Board of Nursing

Statutory Authority: Code of Ala. 1975, §34-21-2(2)

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610-X-3-.02 Standards for Approval

(1) The governing institution, nursing program administrator, and nursing faculty are accountable for the standards, processes, and outcomes of the nursing education program.

- (2) The governing institution offering the nursing program shall be:
 - (a) A postsecondary educational institution that is authorized to offer nursing education and is accredited by an organization recognized by the U.S. Department of Education.
 - (b) Approved by the appropriate State of Alabama educational agency(ies) if applicable.
- (3) The governing institution shall provide financial support and resources sufficient to meet the outcomes of the nursing education program. Resources include, but are not limited to:
 - (a) Financial.
 - (b) Educational facilities.
 - (c) Equipment.
 - (d) Learning aids.
 - (e) Technology.
 - (f) Administrative, instructional and support personnel.
- (4) The governing institution's administrator or program administrator shall notify the Board, in writing, of any changes in the following:
 - (a) Nursing program administrator.
 - (b) Governing institution administrator.
 - (c) Governance structure of the institution.
 - (d) Accreditation status.
- (5) A nursing education program shall be administered by a qualified program administrator who is accountable for the planning, implementation, and evaluation of the program. Minimum qualifications of a nursing program administrator shall include:
 - (a) An active unencumbered Alabama registered nurse license.
 - (b) An earned graduate degree in nursing.
- (6) The governing institution and nursing program administrator shall provide sufficient numbers of qualified faculty to assure that curriculum implementation and expected program outcomes are achieved. Minimum qualifications of nurse faculty shall include:
 - (a) An active unencumbered Alabama registered nurse license.
 - (b) An earned graduate degree in nursing or a related health field.
- (7) Institutional and program policies and procedures shall:
 - (a) Be written, published, and publicly available.
 - (b) Address students' ability to assume clinical assignments including, but not limited to, educational preparedness and physical, mental, and emotional behaviors.

(c) Provide opportunities for students to regularly participate in the development and evaluation of the program.

(8) Faculty are accountable for curriculum development, implementation, and evaluation.

(9) The curriculum of a nursing education program shall:

(a) Enable the student to develop the nursing knowledge, skills and abilities required for entry level practice, consistent with the scope and standards of nursing practice.

(b) Comply with the standards set forth in this chapter.

(c) Be evidence-based, and outcome-focused.

(d) Provide theoretical and clinical experiences specific to the expected scope of practice of graduates from each type of entry level nursing education program and shall include:

(i) Content for students to attain knowledge and competence in providing a safe and effective care environment.

(ii) Prevention of illness.

(iii) Maintenance, promotion, and restoration of health.

(iv) Psychological integrity of individuals across the life span.

(v) Critical thinking and problem solving skills to assist in recognizing, analyzing, and applying relevant knowledge and skills to nursing care.

(vi) Clinical learning experiences to provide opportunities for students to develop cognitive, psychomotor, and affective skills in the provision of nursing care.

(e) The curriculum content of a nursing education program shall include:

(i) Liberal arts and sciences supportive of the nursing program.

(ii) On or before August 1, 2008, all practical nursing programs shall offer anatomy and physiology with a corresponding lab.

(iii) Nursing foundations, pharmacology, nutrition, and community-based nursing.

(iv) History and trends of nursing, cultural diversity, legal and ethical responsibilities, and nursing practice responsibilities including leadership, management, delegation, and health care delivery systems.

(v) Theory and clinical learning experiences in the areas of adult, maternal, child, and psychiatric/mental health nursing.

(10) The governing institution, nursing program administrator, and nursing faculty are accountable for selecting and evaluating the teaching methods, delivery modalities, and processes used to achieve expected program outcomes.

(11) Clinical supervision of students shall comply with the standards set forth in this Chapter.

(a) Clinical activities shall be supervised by a registered nurse who is knowledgeable of educational strategies and subject matter, and is experienced in the clinical technologies essential to the safe practice of nursing.

(b) The registered nurse shall hold an unencumbered license to practice professional nursing in Alabama.

(c) The clinical supervisor shall be readily accessible to assign or prescribe a course of action, give procedural guidance, direction and evaluation for students engaged in the clinical learning experience.

(d) The faculty-student ratio in clinical practice shall be collaboratively determined by the professional nursing faculty, the School of Nursing administration and the professional nurse administrator, or designee, in the clinical agency. In licensed hospitals that provide inpatient acute care, the faculty to student ratio shall not exceed 1:8 during clinical learning experiences. The faculty-student ratio shall be determined according to the:

(i) Complexity of the educational experience.

(ii) Acuity of the patient(s).

(iii) Physical layout of the clinical setting.

(iv) Student's level of knowledge and skills to provide safe patient care.

(e) The nursing education program shall work with clinical agencies for the planning, implementation, and evaluation of clinical experiences.

(f) Clinical learning experiences shall include the development of skills in clinical judgments, management of care for groups of patients, delegation to, and supervision of other health care personnel.

(g) Nursing faculty shall maintain responsibility and accountability for planning, implementation, and evaluation of all student clinical learning experiences.

Author: Alabama Board of Nursing

Statutory Authority: Code of Ala. 1975, §34-21-2(2)

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610-X-3-.03 Distance Education

(1) Delivery of instruction by distance education methods shall enable students to meet the goals, competencies, and objectives of the educational program and the standards of the Board, including supervised clinical learning experiences.

(2) A distance learning program shall establish a means for assessing individual student and program outcomes.

(3) A nursing education program based outside the state of Alabama who provides students with clinical learning experiences in Alabama shall:

(a) Notify the Alabama Board of Nursing, in writing, thirty (30) days in advance of the clinical learning experience:

(i) Name of student, including license number if the student is licensed in Alabama.

(ii) Name and license number of the clinical supervisor.

(iii) Name and location of the clinical facility.

(iv) Learning outcomes expected of the student.

(v) Name and license number of the nursing faculty responsible for the evaluation and oversight of the student's clinical learning experience.

(4) Have accreditation an organization recognized by the U.S. Department of Education.

(5) Comply with all standards of this Chapter, including those related to clinical supervision of student learning experiences. The Board may request periodic reports for the purpose of data collection or to determine compliance with the provisions of this chapter.

Author: Alabama Board of Nursing

Statutory Authority: Code of Ala. 1975, §34-21-5

History: Filed September 25, 2006. Effective October 31, 2006. **Amended:** Filed September 21, 2007. Effective October 26, 2007.

610-X-3-.04 Outcome Standards

(1) Graduates shall demonstrate theoretical and clinical competence for entry into practice.

(2) Graduates, as a composite of first time writers, shall achieve no less than an eighty percent (80%) pass rate on a board selected national licensure exam. The Board shall establish the reporting time period.

(3) There shall be a written plan for the systematic evaluation of the total program that is comprehensive, demonstrates ongoing evaluation, is based on program outcomes and incorporates continuous improvement. The systematic evaluation plan shall include:

(a) Collection, aggregation, analysis and trending of data.

(b) Programmatic outcomes, levels of achievement, evaluative criteria, assignment of responsibility, frequency of assessment, methods of achievement, actions taken and quantitative data collected.

(c) Ongoing evaluation and revisions based on the evaluation.

Author: Alabama Board of Nursing

Statutory Authority: Code of Ala. 1975, §34-21-5

History: September 27, 1982. Amended May 6, 1985. Amended May 23, 1997.

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610-X-3-.05 Deficiencies

(1) The Board shall conduct surveys and evaluations as often as necessary to determine compliance with all standards set forth in Chapter 610-X-3.

(2) The Board shall, upon determining that a program is not in compliance with standards set forth in Chapter 610-X-3, provide to the governing institution administrator and nursing program administrator a written notice of deficiencies that establishes a reasonable time, based upon the number and severity of deficiencies, to correct deficiencies.

(3) A nursing education program that receives a Notice of Deficiency from the Board shall establish a written plan within the specified time and provide reports to the Board as requested to document progress in removing deficiency(ies).

(4) The Board shall conduct a hearing for any program that fails to correct identified deficiencies within the time specified by the Board. The Board may:

(a) Withdraw approval from the nursing education program resulting in graduates being ineligible to take the licensing examination.

(b) Continue approval of the nursing education program for a specified time period.

(c) Direct the nursing program administrator to notify students in writing.

Author: Alabama Board of Nursing

Statutory Authority: Code of Ala. 1975, §34-21-5

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610-X-3-.06 Establishing a New Program

(1) A governing institution that plans to establish a new nursing education program shall submit to the Board a minimum of six (6) months in advance of the expected opening date:

(a) A letter of intent identifying the governing institution, the type of nursing education program, and the status of approval from accrediting bodies and state agencies.

(b) A feasibility study that includes:

(i) Purpose of establishing the new nursing education program.

- (ii) Availability of health care agencies with sufficient practice experiences to support the program. Letters of commitment and contract proposals are accepted documents for inclusion to demonstrate meeting the standard.
- (iii) Enrollment projections and identification of potential students.
- (iv) Availability of adequate educational facilities and practice sites for clinical learning experiences throughout the life span.
- (v) Assurance of adequate financial resources to support the initial and continuing program including submission of the proposed initial budget and continuing budget.
- (vi) Availability of qualified faculty for theoretical and clinical instruction.
- (vii) Timeline for planning and implementation of the proposed program.
- (viii) Determination of demand for graduates of specific proposed program in geographical area.
- (ix) Impact on existing nursing programs within a fifty (50) mile radius of the proposed program.
- (x) Organizational structure of the governing institution and placement of proposed nursing education program within the overall organization.

(2) The governing institution shall submit an application for approval to establish a new program at least three (3) months prior to expected review by the Board.

(3) The application for Establishing a New Program shall include:

- (a) Demonstration of the potential to meet all standards identified in this Chapter.
- (b) Verification that a nursing program administrator or nursing faculty member is employed to develop the nursing program.
- (c) Verification of availability of qualified nursing faculty to support the proposed numbers of student admissions to the new nursing education program.
- (d) Curriculum plan that complies with the standards identified in this Chapter.
- (4) A survey may be conducted to amplify, clarify, and verify information in the application.
- (5) If all standards for approval are met, the program shall receive provisional approval.
- (6) Following receipt of the first fiscal year report of performance of graduates on the national licensure examination, the Board shall conduct a survey to determine if all standards for approval of a nursing education program have been met. The Board may:

(a) Grant full approval if standards of a nursing education program are met.

(b) Continue provisional approval and provide to the governing institution and nursing program administrator a written notice of deficiencies that establishes a reasonable time, based upon the number and severity of deficiencies, to correct deficiencies.

Author: Alabama Board of Nursing

Statutory Authority: **Code of Ala. 1975**, §34-21-5

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610-X-3-.07 Closing a Program

(1) A governing institution seeking to close a nursing education program shall submit written notification to the Board at least six months prior to the planned closing date.

(2) The governing institution shall ensure that all standards for nursing education programs are maintained and all necessary courses are taught until the last student is transferred or graduated.

(3) The governing institution shall secure and provide for the permanent custody and storage of records of students and graduates. The Board shall be notified of the location and method of retrieving information from these records.

Author: Alabama Board of Nursing

Statutory Authority: **Code of Ala. 1975**, §34-21-2(1)

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Amended: Filed September 25, 2006. Effective October 31, 2006.

610-X-3-.08 Nursing Education Program Hearing

(1) A governing institution may request a hearing before the Board regarding the Board's decisions about the nursing education program.

(2) The Board shall conduct a hearing prior to withdrawing approval or denying approval of a nursing education program.

(3) The institution may present any written or oral evidence for the Board's consideration at any Board hearing.

Author: Alabama Board of Nursing

Statutory Authority: **Code of Ala. 1975**, §34-21-2(1)

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